

#E1-1730  
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**North American  
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**Message :**

AB-6-430X & AB-1040X

Ms. Ghosh -

Thank you for talking with me by telephone today about the rail abandonment proposed in AB-6 (Sub-No. 430X).

As noted in that conversation, we hope the STB will accurately assess the obvious negative effect of ODOT's plan to force this unsafe substitution of exclusive at-grade rail crossings for long-standing underpasses, and, also that the entirely inadequate window for public comment be extended.

It's necessary for me to send two fax transmissions to give you all related material. The second fax will follow immediately.

Thanks, again, for your consideration.

TOM ELMORE, Executive Director  
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**From:** NATI  
Tom Elmore

**To:** STB Environmental Analysis  
Rini Ghosh

**Date:** 11/1/2005

**Page(s):** 1

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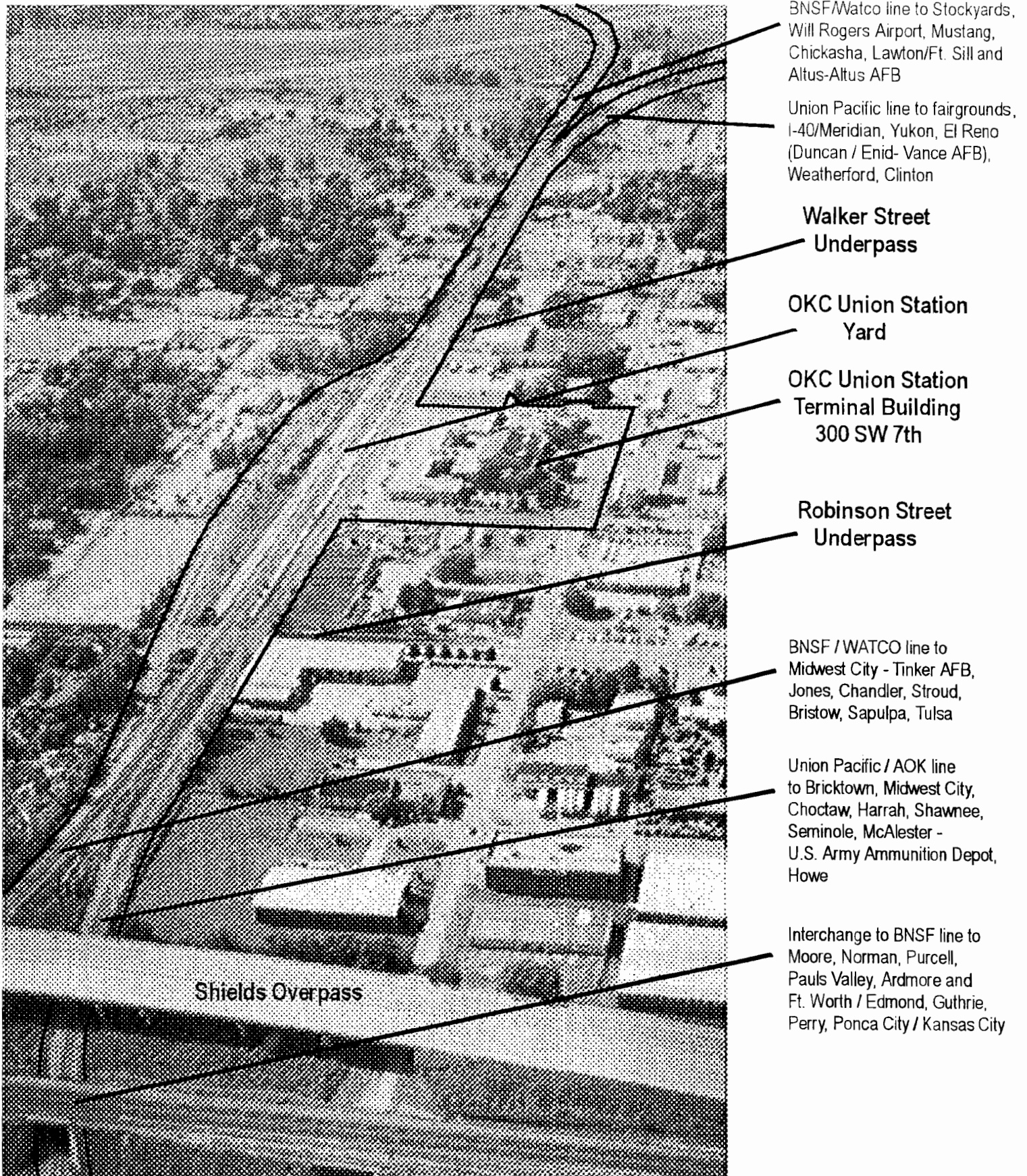
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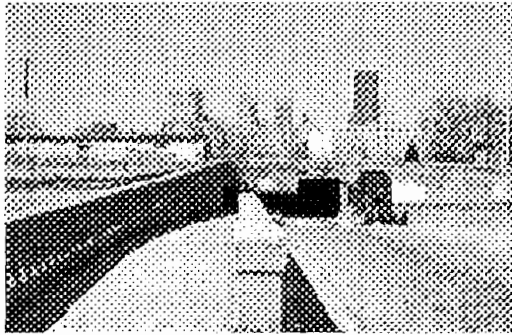
# The OKC Union Station Complex, from a recent aerial photograph

The route of the "New I-40 Crosstown" lies directly through the Union Station yard, shown below. Every square inch of the elegant rail yard would be excavated.

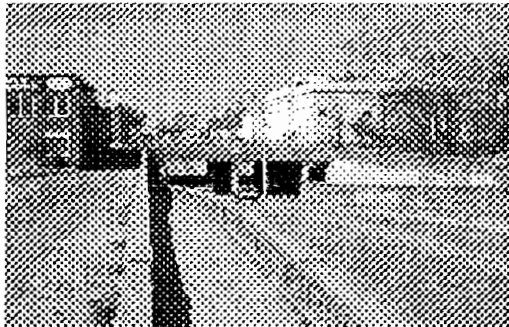


# **This is progress? "I-40 Crosstown" plan will destroy historic South Robinson and Walker underpasses, sending more trains across street level crossings in Capitol Hill. South OKC commuters face new potential delays, danger and less certain emergency access.**

*The elegant Robinson & Walker "subways" have safely cleared autos, trucks and pedestrians under the railroad tracks on the Union Station corridor for 75 years. Is the Oklahoma Department of Transportation "in reverse" on railway crossing safety?*



The Robinson Underpass



The Walker Underpass

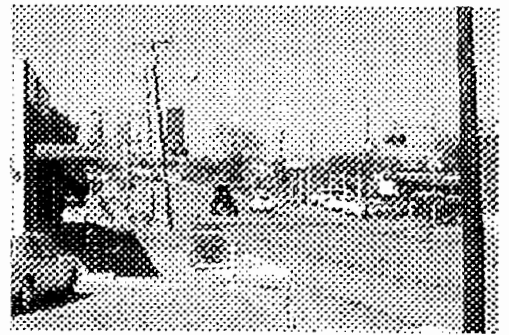
All east-west BNSF rail traffic would be re-routed from the existing main over the S. Robinson underpass...

...to the old "belt line" which crosses S. Robinson near the 2100 block "at grade," (which means "at street level").

## **A Fair Trade?**

All east-west BNSF rail traffic would be rerouted from the existing main over the S. Walker underpass...

...to the old "belt-line" which crosses S. Walker near the 2100 block "at grade," (which means "at street-level").



The old "belt line" crossing further south



The old "belt line" crossing further south

One of the reasons OKC Union Station was created at the end of the 1920s was to rid downtown of the many street level railroad crossings which served the old downtown Frisco and Rock Island Railway depots. The crossings themselves were undoubtedly a maintenance problem, and mixing auto and pedestrian traffic with trains is always a safety problem, as were the prospects that access for emergency vehicles might be blocked by trains at any time. At its 1931 opening, Union Station with its all new rail corridors and street underpasses eliminated all those concerns.

Like the Union Station rail facility, the Robinson and Walker underpasses were "built to last." 75 years later, they're still doing their job, clearing street and pedestrian traffic safely under active rail lines. They're part of the OKC landscape and are probably taken for granted by most folks - which is to say few would normally think about them unless they suddenly disappeared, along with the solutions they've provided, leaving more trains crossing at street level somewhere in the city. Of course, that goes against accepted planning standards in the modern world - but destroying the overpasses and some of the solutions they brought is apparently what our state Department of Transportation proposes to do as part of the "New I-40 Crosstown plan." It's a poorly conceived and strangely backward plan.

Because ODOT places little value on railways, the "New Crosstown plan" would route the new 10-lane expressway directly through the Union Station yard, destroying the historic underpasses along with the rest of the rail plant which was built to serve the station. Burlington Northern Santa Fe trains which now use the station corridor over the underpasses would be RE-ROUTED on existing street level crossings near the 2100 blocks of South Robinson and South Walker. The crossings would be upgraded - but they'd still be "at grade" or street level, with all the inherent safety and access problems associated with such crossings. Property values might suffer as well. After 75 years, "history would repeat itself" as the problems of old downtown are created all over again in Capitol Hill. If Capitol Hill residents and property owners had any idea this was part of "the plan," would they think of it as "progress?"



# Tell your elected officials what you think of the "New I-40 Crosstown" project! (Time is short. Do it today!)

Among the standards for the upcoming federal transportation funding reauthorization (TEA 3 - the successor to TEA 21) is that, while congress wants to give local governments more flexibility in how federal transportation dollars can be spent, they also want to scrupulously avoid allowing new problems to be created with these dollars whose remediation will require MORE federal dollars later. The "New I-40 Crosstown" project is a perfect example of exactly that kind of short-sighted thinking. It creates many more problems than it solves.

Oklahoma City officials are ALREADY talking about "light rail." The best rail transit systems have been built using precisely the kind of infrastructure the "New Crosstown" project destroys. Without such infrastructure, the price of rail transit skyrockets. It is simply not necessary to destroy the Union Station yard to have a better downtown segment of I-40.

Governor Henry can stop this needless destruction. Tell him what you think.

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This information is provided to you by:

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### NORTH AMERICAN TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (NATI)

NATI is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, promoting market-driven, advanced intermodal and multimodal solutions to the nation's transportation problems.

We offer reliable facts, statistics and history of the current transportation picture, both regionally and nationally. We assess the capabilities of available transportation technologies. We analyze and project the effects of current and proposed future public transportation policies in light of

available transportation assets and technologies.

By providing reliable facts and analysis, we work to uphold the interests of U.S. taxpayers in the critical field of transportation, and to provide them with the means to hold special-interests and government accountable.

NATI is not affiliated with or supported by any element of the transportation industry, but is wholly funded by the tax-deductible donations of interested individuals.

**We need and sincerely solicit your financial support.**

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The accompanying map is the promised second fax transmission.

Thank you.

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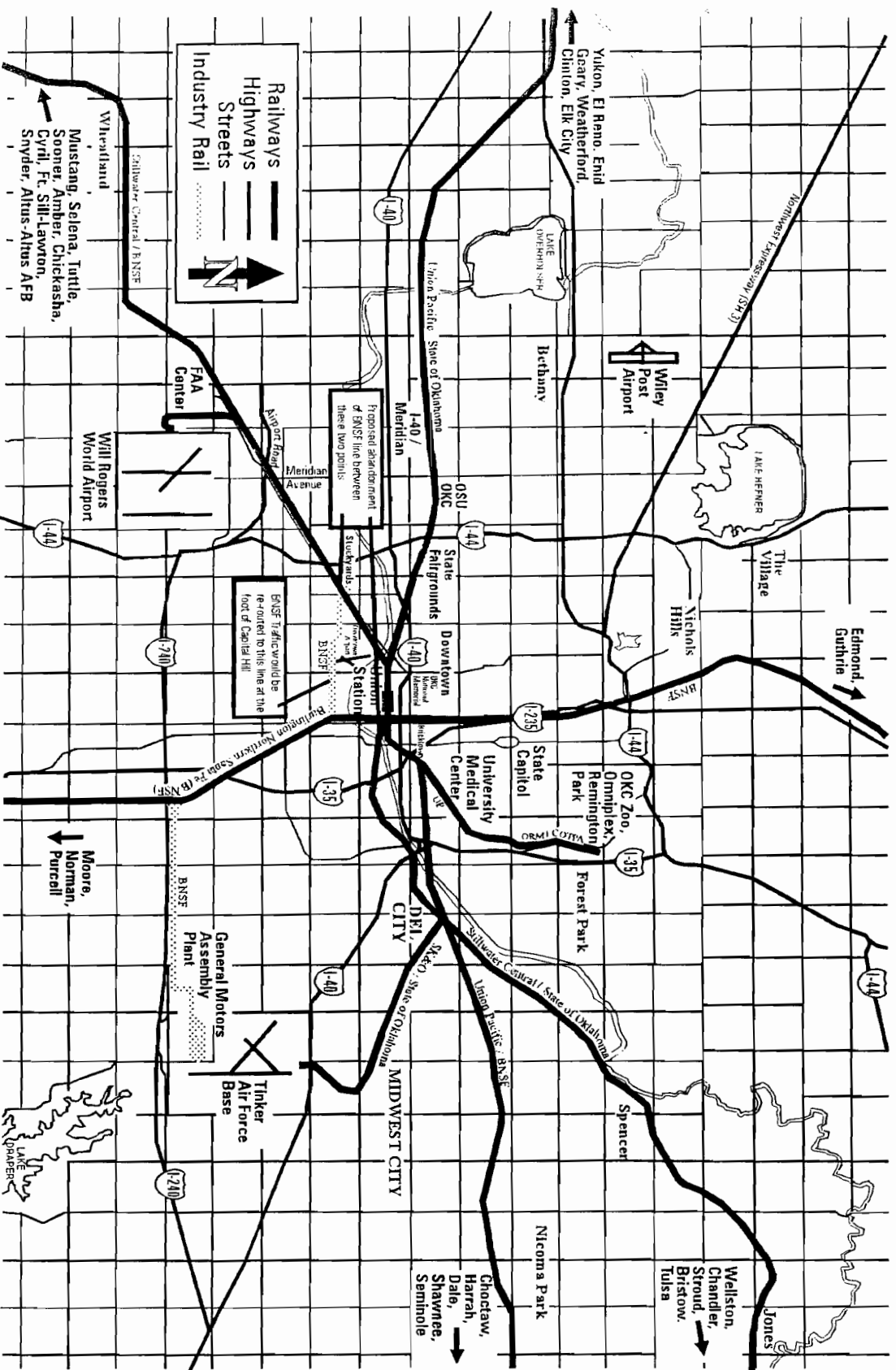
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# Oklahoma City Metro rail lines - Spring, 2003



BNSF - Burlington Northern Santa Fe  
UP - Union Pacific

Stillwater Central - A WATCO Company  
SK80 - South Kansas & Oklahoma - A WATCO Company

ORM - Oklahoma Railway Museum, line leased from  
COTPA - Central Okla. Transit & Parking Authority

(*"State of Oklahoma" lines owned by the Oka. Department of Transportation & operated under lease or lease-purchase agreements by specified commercial railroad companies.*)